

WASHINGTON, DC – As the Peace Corps celebrates its 50th Anniversary, returned Peace Corps volunteers Congressmen Mike Honda (D-CA), Sam Farr (D-CA), Tom Petri (R-Wisc.), and John Garamendi (D-CA) nominated the Peace Corps for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Since its inception, the Peace Corps has deployed nearly a quarter million volunteers to serve poor, neglected, and marginalized communities in the name of peace.

“At the core of the Peace Corps concept, according to founder Sargent Shriver, was service – service to our neighbors, near or far, in desperate need of a helping hand,” said Congressman Honda. Shriver felt the Peace Corps represented some, if not all, of the best virtues in this society and stood for everything we believe in and hope to achieve in the world. I couldn’t agree more. I went into the corps as a college student with little direction; I emerged determined to do something about the pervasive poverty surrounding me. I went into the Corps speaking one language; I emerged speaking another: Spanish, a gift that introduced me to a new world, gave me a new way of understanding new cultures and helped me connect to constituents in California. That gift is what guides me now in Congress. If anything more aptly represents the ethos articulated by the Nobel Peace Prize, it is the Peace Corps.”

“For a half-century Peace Corps has served as a vehicle of peace and hope for impoverished communities around the world,” said Congressman Farr. “Now more than ever, as the world suffers from divisive transnational conflicts and escalating threats, Peace Corps continues to stand as an unparalleled beacon of peace and optimism. Bestowing the Peace Corps with the Nobel Peace Prize will undoubtedly work to promote volunteerism and inspire the next generation of Americans to be peaceful stewards of both their country and the world.”

In a letter addressed to the Norwegian Nobel Committee, the Members of Congress cited the Peace Corps’ commitment to Alfred Nobel’s expansive vision of fraternity between nations and the promotion of peace. The letter also highlighted the agency’s powerful and enduring impact on the international community, having “shown the world an inspiring, uplifting side of humanity that reflects our better nature – service to others in the great common cause of global peace and development”.

In the last 50 years, Peace Corps has enabled more than 200,000 individuals to serve in 139 developing countries around the world. Peace Corps Volunteers have worked with millions of individuals in impoverished areas on essential projects in health, education, agriculture, and technology—that are designed to lift up local capacity and facilitate community ownership. While establishing itself as a world-renowned institution, the Peace Corps continues to change and evolve to best meet the development needs of a rapidly changing world.

"As a former volunteer, I know firsthand the important role the Peace Corps plays in assisting the people of less developed countries to get an education, improve agricultural and business practices and more," said Congressman Petri. "The heart and soul of the Peace Corps are the volunteers, mostly young, who commit themselves to service in unfamiliar cultures, far removed from many modern comforts and conveniences. Through their experiences they get as much as they give, but the challenges they face make clear that they are engaged in service to people

- it's far more than just a job. The Peace Corps deserves greater recognition, especially for the service work performed by its volunteers."

"For 50 years, the Peace Corps has served the world - eradicating diseases, building homes, and teaching children in five continents," said Congressman Garamendi. "As a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer, I've witnessed the Peace Corps' ability to change lives and transform hearts and minds in the developing world. The Peace Corps deserves the Nobel Peace Prize, because it represents the best in universal human values: compassion, selflessness, and dedication to our fellow man."

As Peace Corps embarks on its 50th Anniversary year, the demand remains high. There is currently a waiting list of over 20 countries that have requested Volunteers, as well as other countries that have requested an increase in the number of Volunteers.

As established by Alfred Nobel, the Nobel Peace Prize is awarded to the person or entity that, "shall have done the most or then best work for fraternity between nations, for the abolition or reduction of standing armies and for the holding of peace congresses."